

"THE RAILWAY"

Few of this generation remain who can remember when grain was hauled by sleigh to be sold at Woodbridge and Weston, and poultry and produce taken all the way to Toronto by the same transportation. I remember when my parents would spend several days dressing geese and chicken and making butter, then leaving home shortly after midnight by team and sleigh to treck all the way to Toronto to dispose of it.

The advent of the railway brought prosperity and an easement from the hardships of both the village and community. Mr. Simeon Lemon (former of the 6th Conc) first conceived the idea of bringing a branch line railway from what is now Oak Ridges, across country to Schomberg. It took several years to convince the powers that be that such a railway would be beneficial to the people as well as profitable to the company, but finally the survey was made and the line constructed under the supervision of MacKenzie and Mann in 1902. It was a branch line, connected at what was then called Schomberg Junction, with the Metropolitan Electric Radial Line that ran from North Toronto to Sutton. This line was not electrified, but was steam propelled and completed in 1903. The first flat car, hauled by the steam engine puffed and screeched its way into Schomberg and took a car load of pioneers for their first ride to the junction and back free of charge. Mr. Robt. Shelson ran a copper shop right near where the tracks ended and drove the last spike. Miss Shelson was presented with a gold key, by the company to commemorate the occasion and because she was the oldest citizen in the gathering,

Con'd

Dr. Brereton, used his horse and buggy to take some of the older citizens to the station to see the train come in (I have a picture of this occasion). The story is told that on its return, as it passed Mr. W. Archibald's farm on the corner of the 6th and the Aurora Lloydtown Road, his horses became so frightened that one dropped dead in the pasture field. The train crew consisted of three men, the first of which were Engineer - Al Walton; Fireman - C. Pearson; and the Conductor - Luke Lyons. Jack Walsh was the first night watchman and Mr. Butcher the first Station Agent. The station still remains and is the private residence of Jack Foster.

Coal was taken on before each trip from a large pile in the Station Yard and water from the creek as they crossed the 7th concession. Passenger service was commenced the following year with two trains a day and three on Wednesdays, when a special trip was made to take the produce, purchased every Wednesday morning at the Market which is now the Community Hall in Schomberg. Butter, eggs and poultry were brought from miles around to be purchased by Toronto buyers. Livestock was also shipped by stock car and a little later, grain from the three elevators. These were left on the diamond at Bond Lake to be picked up and delivered to Toronto by the Grand Trunk Line.

Mr. Lyons quotes his wages as a section hand, (before becoming a conductor) was nine dollars a week.

It is not possible to record the exact date when the railway was electrified and called the Metropolitan Railway co., but it is supposed to be about 1916 and at this time the service was raised to 5 trips a day.

By 1927 another phase of programs and progress was becoming

Con't

popular, when transportation of farm products were transported by truck, and business for the railway began to decline and be discontinued in 1928. The last service rendered to the Community was when the material used to pave the 9th concession to Nobleton, was brought in by rail after it had ceased to function as a daily service. The old tracks were not taken up until sometime later, but the old railway bed may still be traced in places where it crossed the concessions. Although this old train is almost forgotten by this generation, it holds many memories for the older people of the community such as the annual Sunday School picnic to Bond Lake and the yearly shopping expeditions for the housewife who journeyed to Toronto to buy wearing apparel for the whole family and sundries for the home that could not be purchased here. Progress has marked "Finnis" to a service that once meant much to our community.

Mrs. Olla Marchant
Schomberg, Ontario.